

Picture of Keetley in Wasatch County.

All remnants of the town were obliterated with the waters of the Jordanelle Reservoir.  
Photograph from Wasatch DUP Publication.

### KEETLEY

The northernmost settlement in Wasatch County was the town of Keetley which owed its existence to mining activity in the area. It was the last community in the county to be organized, and for several decades it was known and identified only as a mining shaft. Its location was first plotted in 1887 when leaders of the Park City Mining District chose a point of elevation for the portal of a drainage tunnel from the properties of the Daly Mining Company and the Ontario Silver Mining Company. The man chosen to supervise the work on the tunnel was John B. "Jack" Keetley. Keetley was born November 28, 1841, and grew up in Marysville, Kansas. While a youth, he became a Pony Express rider. He engineered the Ontario Drain Tunnels, and by 1898, Tunnel No. 2 had been completed to drain the Park City properties of the mining companies. In June 1917, the Park Utah Mining Company was incorporated and secured rights to use the five-mile drain tunnel. (Water from the drain tunnel now flows into the Jordanelle Reservoir.)

Keetley was a generous man, particularly fond of children, and many residents of the county who were youngsters during the construction of

the tun  
the hil  
a prom  
develo  
hood h

On  
west o  
no res  
a vast  
above  
becaus

Th  
Glen A  
lost in  
proper  
The Va  
was w  
centag  
load of  
buckle  
wards  
were lo

Ev  
the are  
Pacific  
ture se  
paint t  
the mi  
brough

Ge  
east si  
furnish  
gather  
row of  
buildin

Th  
twelve  
dation  
west of  
new sc

In  
built a

the tunnel remember him for his kindness to them as they romped over the hills under which his men were digging. Years later, George A. Fisher, a prominent cattleman and land developer, named the community which developed in the valley below the project, Keetley, in honor of his "childhood hero."

Other mining projects took place in this area. The McCune Tunnel west of Keetley, and the McHenry Shaft in the same area both produced no results. Later it was discovered that the McHenry Shaft had missed a vast vein of ore by only eighteen feet. Another failed effort directly above the spot where the portal of the drain tunnel was placed failed because it was focused too high on the Blue Ledge slope.

The East Utah shaft, the Columbus Tract on Bonanza Flat, and the Glen Allen or "Glencoe" were developed in the area. Many fortunes were lost in these endeavors. A refining mill was constructed on the Glencoe property through which the discovered ore was reduced to concentrate. The Vallejo project, further south in the mountains west of Jordanelle, was worked intermittently for several years even though a heavy percentage of iron in the ore made transportation a serious problem. A wagon load of this ore was so heavy that at one time the Provo River bridge buckled as George McDonald drove over it as he was headed south towards Heber City. McDonald escaped alive, but his wagon and team were lost and the bridge was destroyed.

Even before Keetley's mining boom, the Gail Fisher family lived in the area in a rambling farm house on the Fisher Ranch. When the Union Pacific Railroad came to the Keetley area in 1923, the community's future seemed secure, and Charles Roy Lenzi of Park City was hired to paint the houses and mine buildings that had been constructed around the mine tunnel. Mr. Lenzi decided afterwards to settle in the area and brought his family from Park City. He was later appointed postmaster.

George Fisher, besides building his home and six rental units on the east side of the highway, constructed a store on the west side which furnished meat and produce to the miners and local residents and was a gathering place for the townspeople. South of the mine road he erected a row of small cabins. On the north was a two-story, ten-unit apartment building which housed miners and their families.

The school in Hailstone (Elkhorn) was a small wooden building with twelve grades. In 1924 the Elkhorn schoolhouse was jacked off its foundation and dragged across the fields to a new location just south and west of the Keetley store. This one-room school served for a year until a two-story brick building, was built.

Two men known as Big and Little Joe from Butte, Montana, built a square amusement hall, painted it blue, and named it

Reservoir.

town of  
It was  
eral de-  
ication  
District  
m the  
ining  
John  
up in  
er. He  
had  
s. In  
se-  
in

any  
of

the Blue Goose. This became a favorite entertainment spot for miners. It also offered entertainment such as boxing and wrestling matches. "On weekends, dances were held at the Blue Goose. A Salt Lake City socialite, who also ran a string of girls in Park City, furnished dance partners. Later, when it became more lucrative to take the girls to Salt Lake City, the dances were attended by local girls."<sup>29</sup>

The depression era was the start of the decline of Keetley. The Blue Goose closed its doors in 1930 and was later torn down. The decline of mining further depressed the area.

An interesting part of the history of Keetley occurred during World War II when a prosperous Oakland produce dealer named Fred Isamu Wada visited the area. His wife Masako was from Ogden, and they were investigating possible areas for relocation for himself and California Japanese. Wada decided that eastern Utah was too remote, and he struck a bargain with Mayor George Fisher of Keetley who leased him land in exchange for bringing Japanese farm laborers to the area.

Some local hostility to the proposal was displayed, but Fisher assured the residents that all Japanese would be American citizens, some of them second generation.

On March 26, 1942, Wada and a number of other families left Oakland for Utah. They left just in time to avoid being moved to Japanese internment camps which began about that time. When the weather improved enough to clear the property, the Japanese started work repairing buildings, planting a large truck garden, and raising chickens, pigs, and goats. Later, the Keetley farmers would herd beef cattle and raise dairy cows as well. The men also worked on local farms, especially in the sugar beet fields.

The occasional hostility shown to the new residents of the county was resolved as the local residents were assured that the Japanese were there to produce foodstuff for the war effort. The Japanese children attended school in either Park City or Heber City. The adults maintained close ties to the Japanese internees at the Topaz relocation camp in Millard County. About two-thirds of them returned to their homes in California after the war ended. The others remained in Utah, scattering to a number of different communities. Fred Isamu Wada, who had lost all his previously owned property in Oakland, moved his family to the Los Angeles area where he prospered in the produce business for many years.

As for Keetley, the small community came to an end with the rising waters of Jordanelle Reservoir in 1995.<sup>30</sup>

The  
at which  
in the ar  
when the  
Dam and  
two rese  
voir to 17  
Besic  
Utah, it l  
mer hom  
center, at  
winter sp



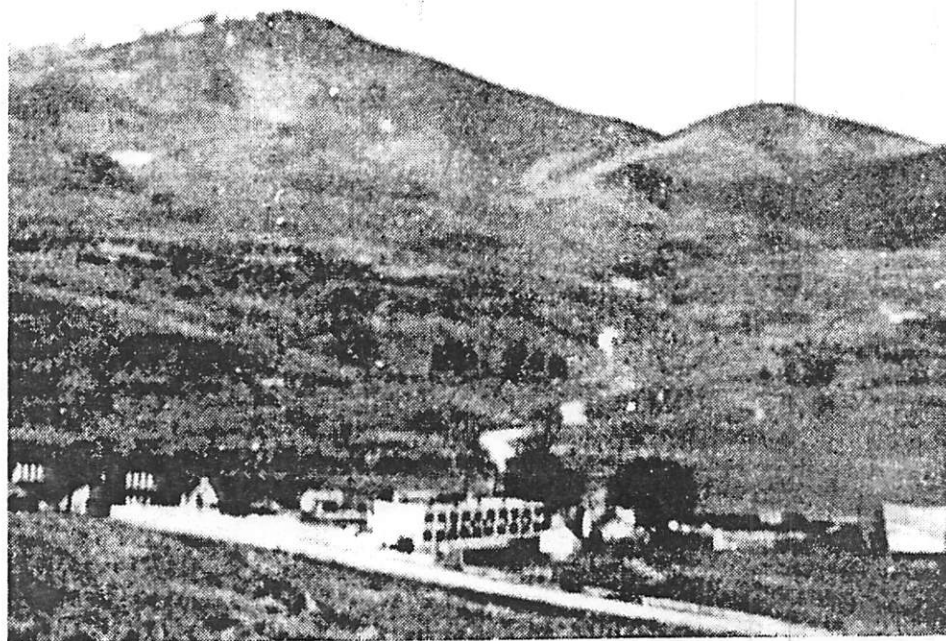
Keetley, the chief engineer in charge of driving the tunnel.<sup>14</sup>

### SOLDIERS SUMMIT

Soldiers Summit is the only town in Wasatch County which does not lie in the Provo Valley. It was named for soldiers of Johnston's Army, some of whom are said to have died and been buried on the top of the pass between the Colorado Basin and the Great Basin.<sup>15</sup> The town at one time was the center of Denver & Rio Grande railroad shop activity, but since the withdrawal of the shops most of the homes were torn down.

<sup>14</sup>George A. Fisher, *Along the Road* (Keetley, Utah, 1950), p. 43.

<sup>15</sup>"Origin of Mormon Names of Cities, Mountains, Streams, Counties, etc. in the U. S.," *Heart Throbs of the West*, Vol. V (compiled by Kate B. Carter, Salt Lake City, 1944), p. 14.



Keetley

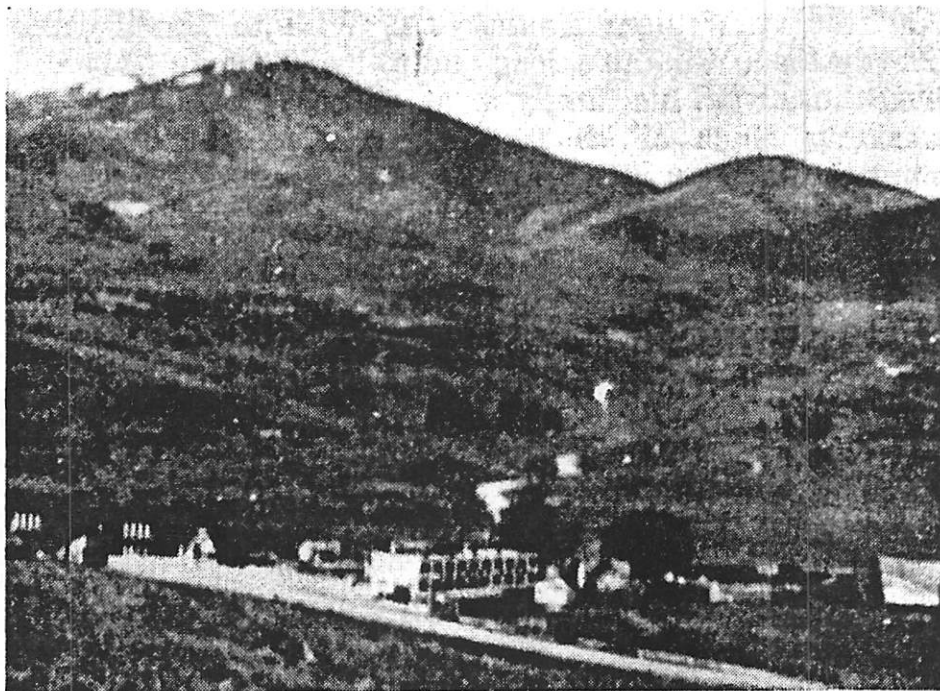
Keetley, the chief engineer in charge of driving the tunnel.<sup>14</sup>

### SOLDIERS SUMMIT

Soldiers Summit is the only town in Wasatch County which does not lie in the Provo Valley. It was named for soldiers of Johnston's Army, some of whom are said to have died and been buried on the top of the pass between the Colorado Basin and the Great Basin.<sup>15</sup> The town at one time was the center of Denver & Rio Grande railroad shop activity, but since the withdrawal of the shops most of the homes were torn down.

<sup>14</sup>George A. Fisher, *Along the Road* (Keetley, Utah, 1950), p. 43.

<sup>15</sup>"Origin of Mormon Names of Cities, Mountains, Streams, Counties, etc. in the U. S.," *Heart Throbs of the West*, Vol. V (compiled by Kate B. Carter, Salt Lake City, 1944), p. 14.



Keetley